



Royal Ballet Farewell—Zita Carno, Riegger

THE Royal Ballet concluded its all-too-brief engagement in the Metropolitan Opera House with a pair of farewells, one a firm tradition, the other likely to become one. Nothing could be more "firm" than the senior partnership of Margot Fonteyn and "Sleeping Beauty" which brought the curtain down on the final Sunday night. But it hardly exceeded in warmth or audience enthusiasm the fond farewell that was accorded the junior alliance of Nadia Nerina, David Blair, and "La Fille Mal Gardée" on Saturday evening.

For whatever reason—and it might have had to do with the departure thereafter of Nerina for her guest engagement in the USSR—this was the highest flight yet attained by Ashton's revival of the old classic during this engagement. In addition to darting deftly through the dancing requirements for Lise, Nerina imparted a quantity of mischievous characteriza-

tion that made her, in fact, a maid as well endowed as she was poorly guarded. The zest and enthusiasm of her performance—as well as the alert response of an audience much more attuned to the spirit of the work than the one that greeted its American premiere a fortnight before—communicated themselves not only to David Blair as Colas and Stanley Holden as the Mother, but also to every other member of the ensemble. It was, in short, a memorable experience.

It was, also, a kind of turning point in the history of the Royal (née Sadler's Wells) Ballet as an American visitor for anything to merit mention coequally with the Aurora of Fonteyn, a long-time synonym for supremacy. But it is inevitable that the company must move ahead from its notable past into a future which will, sooner or later, be Fonteynless. It seems to me that in its current condition it is beginning to develop the resources of ballets and

ballerinas to face that future not only with confidence but with pride. In such works as Ashton's "Fille" and MacMillan's "Baiser de la Fée" (in lesser degree, in Cranko's "Antigone") it has shown the power to rejuvenate its repertory with new works of quality danced by a coterie of younger people (Nerina, Beriosova, Page, Lane, etc.) who will hold the quality line while the still younger elements (Sibley, Beckley, Seymour, Lorrayne, Bergsma, *et al.*) gradually attain maturity. Less conspicuous but no less consequential is the emergence of Blair, Macleary, Burne, and Holden as the nucleus of a male complement decidedly superior to anything the company has had in the past. Finally, in John Lanchbery the Royal Ballet has its most competent music director since Constant Lambert. In totality all these favorable developments might seem a product of luck or at least coincidence, but anyone acquainted with the background of the company's slow, painstaking development would rate sound planning and unrelenting hard work as of at least equal importance.

AS a reward for having attained his seventy-fifth birthday (though a somewhat belated one, as the event occurred last April), Wallingford Riegger was honored by the New York Philharmonic with a performance of his Variations for Piano and Orchestra, which date from 1954. Though they were thus written when Riegger was a mere sixty-nine, the variations are amply indicative of the mastery of musical means that he has amassed in the decades of his devotion to music. There were, in those times, lean years of few performances and little recognition in the high places represented by the podiums on which the conductors of our principal orchestras stood. But Riegger didn't find it necessary to deviate from his own path to stray onto those with busier traffic.

Thus he has reached his present destination with a life's work consistent in tone and steady in development, of which these variations (written on a Louisville Orchestra commission) are a characteristic element. They show a cheerful and admirable willingness to follow the thread of musical idea wherever it may lead, without regard for significance of the capitalized sort. It not only exposes an engaging variety of personality traits—pensive, piquant, ironic, entertaining—through the manipulation of a twelve-note theme, but also provides a rousing display piece for the talents of such a facile pianist as Zita Carno, who played the solo part expertly.

Whether Miss Carno (a product of New York's High School of Music and

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Art and the Manhattan School of Music) would have qualified as a Philharmonic soloist otherwise (she was the composer's preferred performer) is at least doubtful. As well as participating in the premiere, she was heard in the D minor concerto of Mozart with distinctly less success. Her good fingers tend to produce a more percussive sound than is preferable in Mozart, and she also lacks the refinement of tonal and dynamic means expected in such surroundings. But the balancing traits of musicality and earnestness which prompted her to write her own brief, tasteful cadenzas may be the important ones of her future development.

As beginning and end, Leonard Bernstein provided performances of Weber's "Oberon" Overture and Schumann's Second Symphony, common enough fare of the symphonic repertory, set as a banquet under the current theme of "Schumann and the Romantic Movement." As in last week's "Leonore No. 3" of Beethoven, the coordinated impulse of leader and players made for a higher standard of execution than the orchestra has previously attained under his direction.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

Wild West (a scenario)

By George Starbuck

HAWOO comes a
tip-top
charliechaplin
engine talking Choctaw

where a busterkeaton
turkeybuzzard
chip chops
buffalo chumps.

Bam Bam Bam Bam
stick em up quicker, Bub:

housefront, storefront,
progress on the march makes

TRACKS while a
clip-clop
bona fide
fodder-burner turns tail

at a matthewbrady
birdie-waver's
flip flop
flash in the pan.

And Man Man Man Man
gimme some ol' time

tintype skin-tight
buttons-and-bows jobs THERE.

MARS

From War's Dust, Phoenix of Peace

"Formula for Death $E=MC^2$ (The Atom Bomb and After)," by Fernand Gigon (Roy. 223 pp. \$3.50), *cries out against the use of nuclear weapons. Werner Wells, associate professor of surgery at the University of North Carolina, is editor-translator of "Hiroshima Diary."*

By Werner Wells

THIS is a poorly contrived, fragmentary, flashback account of the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The basic theme of the book is condemnation of nuclear weapon testing and nuclear warfare. With this I heartily agree. In attempting to make a case, however, the author flounders.

After a sketchy introduction, in which the scientists who discovered some secrets of the atom are castigated, the flight of the *Enola Gay* is recounted as though it were completely unprovoked—and with a stunning disregard for the emotional and psychological background which, at the time, caused almost no one, the Japanese included, to regard the bombing as unnatural in an all-out war for creature survival.

Case after case is recorded of alleged personal conversations with atom bomb survivors, although it is obvious that several of the accounts, distorted and embellished, are lifted from Michihiko Hachiya's "Hiroshima Diary." The author's attempt to overwhelm the reader with horror and revulsion degenerates through repetition and exaggeration into bathos and morbid hyperbole.

Much is made of postwar efforts by Americans visiting Hiroshima to recompense and reconstitute atom bomb survivors. This the author attributes to an overwhelming sense of guilt afflicting Americans. "The dollars thus sent to Hiroshima serve both to ameliorate the misfortunes of the poor victims and to still the pangs of conscience of those who have given them. . . . Another example . . . the case of Mr. Cousins, who collected fifty thousand dollars in the United States for the care of the young girls in Hiroshima, mutilated or disfigured by the atom bomb." One would like to think the author naive; rather he is possessed with guile. We all regret the bombing of Hiroshima, but

so do we regret the fire raids over Tokyo, the destruction of Coventry, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the ghastly attempt by Hitler and his minions to exterminate the Jews of Europe. The moral implications of Hiroshima are obviously beyond the comprehension of M. Gigon.

I was annoyed by the allegation that "Hiroshima Diary" was suppressed. "Owing to American censorship, this book, though finished at the beginning of 1953, only recently appeared." The same accusation was broadcast on the cover of *Science et Vie*, a Parisian magazine that the University of North Carolina Press permitted to publish "Hiroshima Diary" excerpts. Baron Jacques Benoist-Mechin, who made an elegant and sensitive French translation of "Hiroshima Diary," was chagrined. M. Gigon fails to mention the Benoist-Mechin translation, although it is obvious that he "used" it.

If a reviewer may defend himself and his government, "Hiroshima Diary" first appeared serially in the Japanese medical journal *Teishin Igaku*, in 1951 and 1952, under the Japanese title "Atom Bomb Gossip." With Dr. Hachiya's permission and gratis publication rights, a crude translation was completed by the time I left Japan in June, 1952. I worked for the next three years to construct an idiomatic American language translation with subsequent publication in August, 1955. Any censorship was my own, with the intent that, when finally rendered, the translation would do justice to the beauty and simplicity of Dr. Hachiya's original account.

The Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission is a special target for the author's spleen. This commission was organized by Presidential decree to conduct, in cooperation with the Japanese, a long-range study of possible delayed radiation effects in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It wasn't intended as a popularity gesture. We expected to be unpopular in many areas, but I do not believe there was a person in the commission who didn't share the sentiments Pasteur expressed in the tension-laden days after the Franco-Prussian War when the institute named for him was opened:

Two contrary laws stand today opposed: one a law of blood and death, which, inventing daily new means of combat, obliges the nations to be ever